

Approved:



KEVIN SULLIVAN

Assistant United States Attorney

Before: THE HONORABLE PAUL E. DAVISON

United States Magistrate Judge

Southern District of New York

23mj2200

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : **SEALED COMPLAINT**
:
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- v. - : Violations of
:
:
RIDON KOLA, : 18 U.S.C. §§ 875(c) and 2.
:
Defendant. : COUNTY OF OFFENSE:
:
:
----- X

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, ss.:

WILLIAM SLATTERY, being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), assigned to the FBI’s New York Joint Terrorism Task Force, and charges as follows:

COUNT ONE
(Threatening Interstate Communications)

1. Between on or about November 19, 2021, and on or about March 14, 2023, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, RIDON KOLA, the defendant, knowingly and intentionally transmitted in interstate and foreign commerce a communication containing a threat to injure the person of another, to wit, KOLA sent multiple messages over the Internet threatening to kill or otherwise injure officers from the City of Yonkers Police Department and the Mayor of Yonkers.

(Title 18, United States Code, Sections 875(c) and 2.)

The bases for my knowledge and for the foregoing charge are, in part, as follows:

2. I am a Special Agent with the FBI, and I have been personally involved in the investigation of this matter. This affidavit is based upon my personal participation in the investigation of this matter, as well as on my conversations with other law enforcement agents, and my examination of various reports and records. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of demonstrating probable cause, it does not include all the facts that I have learned during the course of my investigation. Where the contents of documents and the actions, statements, and

conversations of others are reported herein, they are reported in substance and in part, except where otherwise indicated.

Overview

3. As detailed below, based on, among other things, my review of law enforcement records, publicly available social media posts, and direct social media messages, I know that RIDON KOLA, the defendant, has engaged in escalating threats of violence against, among others, law enforcement, culminating in recent threats against local law enforcement in connection with an upcoming public celebration of St. Patrick's Day. KOLA's posts further demonstrate support of radical Islamic extremism and terrorist attacks, including at least one terrorist attack committed on a public holiday. Moreover, in a recent threatening post, KOLA displayed himself with a weapon—an axe.

The Defendant's 2021 Threats to the Yonkers Police Department and the Yonkers Mayor

4. Based on my participation in this investigation, my communications with other law enforcement officers, and my review of law enforcement reports and records, I know, among other things, that in 2021, the user of an Internet-based social media platform (the "Social Media Platform") with the account name "don18_everything" ("Account-1"), who was later identified, as set forth below, as RIDON KOLA, the defendant, posted to the official Social Media Platform page of the City of Yonkers Police Department (the "YPD Account" and "YPD," respectively) three messages, two of which threatened to kill YPD officers and the Mayor of Yonkers.¹ Specifically, I know the following, in substance and in part:

a. On or about November 19, 2021, KOLA posted to the YPD Account a message in Albanian that YPD translated, in draft form, to the following:² "I am going to slaughter you little girls."

b. On or about December 5, 2021, KOLA posted to the YPD Account the following message: "Starting tomorrow I will start killing your officers just so u know who is doing it, Ridon Kola Albanian blood and I'm going to kill your fat rat mayor."

5. Based on my participation in this investigation, my communications with other law enforcement officers, and my review of law enforcement reports and records, I know, among other things, that on or about December 6, 2021, YPD detectives identified RIDON KOLA, the defendant, as residing at an address in Yonkers, New York (the "Residence"), and proceeded

¹ Account-1 and Account-2 (described below) are each hosted by the Social Media Platform. Based on my training and experience, I know that content posted and messages sent via the Social Media Platform transmit from the user's device over the Internet through the provider's servers (which are outside of New York) before reaching the recipient account or appearing as posted content on the Social Media Platform.

² All translations noted herein are from Albanian to English and provided in draft form subject to revision.

to the Residence to conduct an interview of KOLA. I further know the following occurred during the interview, in substance and in part:

a. KOLA admitted to being the user of Account-1 and to posting the above messages to the YPD Account.

b. Law enforcement officers conducted a consensual search of the Residence and did not observe any weapons. KOLA denied that the threats were serious and stated that he had no plans to harm YPD officers or the Yonkers Mayor. Based on my review of a report of the interview, I know that the YPD detectives who interviewed KOLA assessed his demeanor to be reluctant in making the foregoing statement, and YPD subsequently issued a warning to officers to exercise diligence and caution in any encounters with KOLA.

**The Defendant's 2023 Posts Related to
Violent Islamic Extremism and Threats Against Law Enforcement**

6. Based on my participation in this investigation, my communications with other members of law enforcement, my review of law enforcement reports and records, and my review of publicly available content posted or sent via the Social Media Platform under the account name “billythekidusa” (“Account-2”), used by RIDON KOLA, the defendant, I know, among other things, that Account-2 had the below profile information posted publicly on or about March 9, 2023:³



a. As shown above, beneath the profile name is a statement by KOLA, to “Almighty God Allah” concerning “Islam” and stating, in part, “Now is personal America and the world!!!” along with a “B” and a fire symbol (*i.e.*, a reference to burning) next to the words “cia fbi nsa police judes alive w their families too!”

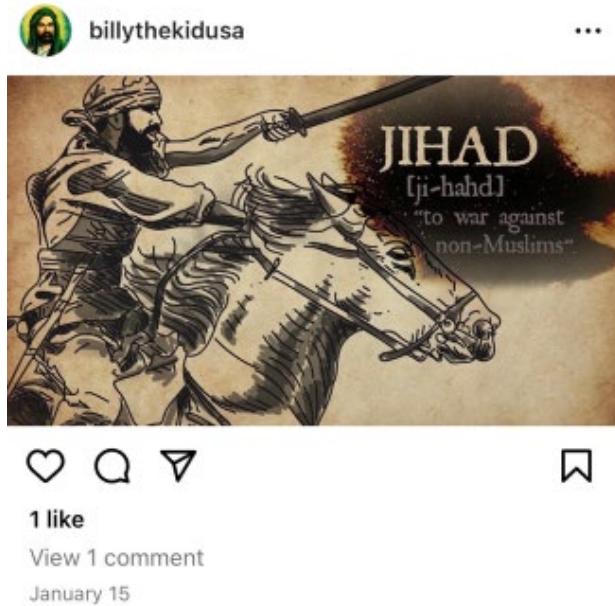
b. Based on my training, experience, and participation in this investigation, I understand “cia” to be a reference to the Central Intelligence Agency, “fbi” to be a reference to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and “nsa” to be a reference to the National Security Agency. Based on the context, I further believe that “judes” is a reference to “judges.”

³ Based on my review of records provided by service providers, I know, among other things, that Account-2 was created on or about January 9, 2023 and was associated with a telephone number that is subscribed to “Ridon Kola” with a listed address of the Residence.

Accordingly, I understand this post to refer to burning U.S. law enforcement and intelligence personnel and judges and their families.

7. Based on my participation in this investigation, my communications with other members of law enforcement, and my review of publicly available posts and comments on Account-2's feed, used by RIDON KOLA, the defendant, I have learned, in substance and in part, the following:

- a. On or about January 15, 2023, Account-2 posted the following:



As shown above, the post contains a reference to “jihad,” defining the term as meaning “to war against non-Muslims.” Later, on or about March 7, 2023, KOLA posted a comment to his above post, as shown below:



i. Based on my training and experience, I know that individuals in the United States and elsewhere inspired by radical Islamic extremism have committed terrorist attacks on U.S. persons as part of their purported efforts to wage “jihad.” Based on my training and experience, I also know that the phrase “Allahu Ekbell,” shown above, is one form of an Arabic phrase meaning “God is great,” which radical Islamic extremists have proclaimed in connection with the commission of terrorist attacks.⁴ Based on my training and

⁴ For example, on or about December 31, 2022, an individual attacked officers of the New York City Police Department with a knife similar to a machete during the New Year’s Eve celebration

experience, I further know that the symbol of the single raised index finger, shown above, is a gesture used by extremist jihadist groups, including the foreign terrorist organization the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (“ISIS”).

ii. Based on my training and experience, I further believe that the use of the term “Llum Inati” in the post is a reference to “illuminati”—a term that, while having distinct historical origins, has been used by conspiracy theorists in support of an idea that a global elite is plotting to create a totalitarian world-wide government.

b. On or about January 17, 2023, Account-2 posted the following:



The text of the post refers to KOLA by name and further contains the single raised index finger symbol used by jihadist groups as well as a reference to “caliphate.” Based on my training and experience, in the context of radical Islamic extremism, the establishment of a “caliphate,” or Islamic state, through violence and killing, is an objective of particular Islamic extremists terrorist organizations, including ISIS.

near Times Square and declared “Allahu Akbar.” See Complaint, 23 Cr. 91 (PKC) (S.D.N.Y. Jan. 10, 2023) (ECF No. 1).

c. On or about March 7, 2023, Account-2 posted the following:



Based on my review of publicly available information and my communications with other members of law enforcement, I know the above images to be of Sayfullo Saipov, the perpetrator of a terrorist attack for ISIS in which Saipov used a truck on Halloween in 2017 to murder eight victims and injure many more on a bike path in lower Manhattan. At the time of the above post, Saipov, having been recently convicted by a jury of all charges in connection with the attack, was still on trial for the jury to determine whether to impose the death penalty (the jury was unable to reach a unanimous decision, meaning Saipov will be sentenced to life imprisonment).

The Defendant's March 2023 Threatening Messages to the YPD

8. Based on my participation in this investigation, my communications with other members of law enforcement, including members of the YPD, and my review of law enforcement reports and records, I have learned, in substance and in part, the following regarding additional threatening messages that RIDON KOLA, the defendant, sent to the YPD Account using Account-2:

a. On or about March 6, 2023, the YPD Account received, among other direct messages from Account-2, one message in which KOLA stated: "I'm looking for that officer that came to my house and threatened me and my family to kill us. I'm going to burn the world until I find him Vallahi [by God], no matter what happens to me there will never be peace in this country anymore! Allahu Ekberr." The foregoing statement was followed by the symbol of the single raised index finger, which, as noted above, is a symbol used by jihadist groups.

b. On or about March 9, 2023, the YPD Account received two direct messages from Account-2, in which KOLA stated: (1) "First people to be crucified will be the Yonkers rats Vallahi. Allahu Ekberr"; and (2) "I will crucify Yonkers cops and their bosses all along McLean ave. It will be a horror scene . . . Allahu Ekberr." The foregoing statements were

each followed by the symbol of the single raised index finger. A screenshot of the two direct messages is shown below:

The screenshot shows a messaging interface. The first message is from a user with a profile picture of a person in a green shirt and a beard. The message reads: "First people to be crucified will be Yonkers rats Vallahi. Allahu Ekber! 🤝🤝🤝". The second message is from the Yonkers Police Department, which has a blue background and white text. It reads: "Thanks for messaging the Yonkers Police. Social media messages are NOT monitored in real-time. If you need police assistance or to report an incident or quality-of-life issue, please call (914) 377-7900; emergencies dial 9-1-1." Below this, there is another message in Spanish: "Gracias por enviar un mensaje a la policía de Yonkers. Los mensajes de las redes sociales NO se monitorean en tiempo real. Si necesita asistencia policial o para informar un incidente o problema de calidad de vida, llame al (914) 377-7900; emergencias marque 9-1-1." The third message is from the user again, reading: "I will crucify Yonkers cops and their bosses all along McLean ave. It will be a horror scene... Allahu Ekber! 🤝🤝🤝". At the bottom, there is a "Reply on Instagram..." button and icons for a pencil, a speech bubble, and a heart.

c. Based my participation in this investigation, my communications with other members of law enforcement, including members of the YPD, and my review of publicly available information, I know that McLean Avenue, referenced in the above direct message, is a central avenue in Yonkers and that a segment of McLean Avenue is the route of the Yonkers St. Patrick's Day Parade taking place on March 18, 2023. I further know, based on publicly available information and my own experience, that numerous YPD officers will be posted to the parade route and that some members of the YPD will participate in the parade itself. I also know that the Residence of RIDON KOLA, the defendant, is in the area where the parade route terminates.

9. Based on my participation in this investigation, my communications with other members of law enforcement, and my review of publicly available content posted to Account-2, I know, in substance and in part, the following:

a. On or about March 12, 2023, three days after the above two direct messages to the YPD Account, RIDON KOLA, the defendant, posted the following on Account-2:



billythekidusa

...



1 like

billythekidusa Hajdeni shkie e juda se jau pres kryet

2 days ago · See translation

b. Based on my review of a draft translation, I understand the post to state the following: "Come on Judas, I'm waiting for you." I have further compared the above photograph with a photograph of KOLA obtained from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles and have determined that the individual shown in the photograph is KOLA.

WHEREFORE, your deponent respectfully requests that a warrant be issued for the arrest of RIDON KOLA, the defendant, and that he be arrested and imprisoned, or bailed, as the case may be.

/s/ William Slattery (credentials inspected)
WILLIAM SLATTERY
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn to me through the
transmission of this Complaint
by reliable electronic means,
pursuant to Federal Rule of
Criminal Procedure 4.1, this
17th day of March, 2023. (via FaceTime)


THE HONORABLE PAUL E. DAVISON
United States Magistrate Judge
Southern District of New York